

## REMARKS

### 35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejections

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-3, 6-9, and 11-21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Singhal in view of Chai.

Singhal and Chai do not teach or suggest estimating decision relevance of an attribute to the user as an increasing function of estimated importance of the attribute to the user and an absolute relative preference value.

Singhal teaches a meta-search engine for searching distributed networks using a plurality of search devices (Abstract). As illustrated in Fig. 4, a ranked list is sent to the user device 100 via the network device 210 to provide the user with a single ranked list of sources of entered search terms covering all or a large part of the network 120 (col. 5, lines 11-15). The primary ranking criteria is the occurrence of search terms, or related search terms in the title and summary of sources identified in the search results of the search engines 140-160. Based on the number of occurrences of the search terms, and their position within the title or summary, a score may be calculated by the meta-search ranking device 230 for the particular source. The score may be further weighted by factors such as the number of search engine devices 140-160 returning the source in their search results (col. 5, lines 16-26). The results obtained from each of the search engines includes a listing of the titles of found sources of the searched terms, or terms related to the search terms, or a summary of each source, or both titles and a summary of each source. The compilation and ranking is based primarily on the

occurrence of the search terms or terms related to the search terms, and relative weights may be given to each search engine (col. 2, lines 42-55). The meta-search engine device 130 may include an association generator that generates a listing of the terms associated with the search terms. When the search query is sent to the search engine devices 140-160, the search query may be modified to include these related terms obtained from the association generator. Singhal makes no mention of estimating decision relevance as an increasing function. Specifically, Singhal does not teach or suggest estimating decision relevance of an attribute to the user as an increasing function of estimated importance of the attributes to the user and an absolute relative preference value.

Chai teaches a system for interactive natural language dialog (Abstract). In its preferred embodiment, the interactions include transaction or information requests, or any combination of the above. The user can specify an item or items and its parameters in natural language and the system responds showing appropriate pages containing either the answer to the user request or a request to provide more information (col. 15, lines 1-16). Chai thus teaches obtaining information from the user about that user's set of target preferences. Chai makes no mention of estimating decision relevance as an increasing function. Specifically, Chai does not teach or suggest estimating decision relevance of an attribute to the user as an increasing function of estimated importance of the attribute to the user and an absolute relative preference value.

Claim 1 has been amended to include estimating decision relevance of the attribute to the user as an increasing function of estimated importance of the attribute to the user and an absolute relative preference value. Specifically, claim 1 includes the limitation "estimating decision relevance of an attribute to the user as an increasing function of estimated importance of the attribute to the user and an absolute relative preference value, wherein the absolute relative preference value of a given item is a measure of a difference between an attribute value for the given item and an average value of the attribute for items in the list of items other than the given item."

Therefore, claim 1 is patentable over Singhal in view of Chai because claim 1 includes a limitation that is not taught or suggested by Singhal and Chai. Furthermore, claim 1 has been amended in accordance with the Examiner's suggestion that claim 10 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 2-3, 6-9, and 11-21 are dependent on claim 1 and should be allowable for the same reasons as claim 1 stated above.

Applicant, accordingly, respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1-3, 6-9, and 11-21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Singhal in view of Chai.

The Examiner has rejected claims 4 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Singhal in view of Chai as applied to claims 1-3 above, and further in view of Busey.

Claims 4 and 5 are dependent on claim 1 and should be allowable for the same reasons as claim 1 stated above.

Applicant, accordingly, respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections of claims 4-5 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Singhal in view of Chai as applied to claims 1-3 above, and further in view of Busey.

#### Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant has noted, with appreciation, that the Examiner has indicated that claim 10 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims and that claims 22-26 have been allowed.

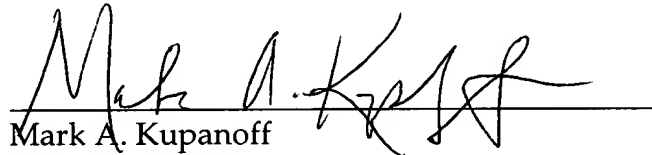
Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite or assist in the allowance of the present application, the Examiner is invited to call Mark A. Kupanoff at (408) 720-8300.

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.136(a)(3), applicant(s) hereby request and authorize the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office to (1) treat any concurrent or future reply that requires a petition for extension of time as incorporating a petition for extension of time for the appropriate length of time and (2) charge all required fees, including extension of time fees and fees under 37 C.F.R. 1.16 and 1.17, to Deposit Account No. 02-2666.

Respectfully submitted,

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